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Shipping of Encaustic Works

R&F Technical Data Sheet TDS1205.2

Shipping Encaustic Works

For good reason artists are often concerned about shipping or transporting works in encaustic paint. Encaustic in extreme situations is particularly vulnerable to cracking, chipping, flaking, or softening (or worse, melting). This is especially true when the shipment or transportation is done in very hot or very cold temperature conditions.

Keep these points in mind:

- 1) Pack it so that nothing touches the wax surface.
- 2) Insulate against temperatures under 40°F and over 80°F.
- 3) Insulate against shock (jarring, dropping, etc.).

The following guidelines apply to paintings, 30" x 30" or less. Packing for larger and/or 3-dimensional work may be done in the same manner or may have to be designed differently for the specific work. Please feel free to call us if you need suggestions for difficult pieces.

Packing so nothing touches the surface

Surround the painting with side strips at least 1/4" higher than the painting's surface. Even if there already is a high frame on the painting, it should still have side strips. These strips can be made from 3/16" foam core taped tightly to the sides of the painting or frame (tape to the back of the painting or frame and tightly at the corners). A lid of foam core can then be attached over the top with tape. If the lid seems too flexible, double its thickness. It is also a good idea to tape a sheet of foam core to the bottom of the painting since the foam core serves as insulation. Your painting is now protected by an **inner box**.

Insulating the painting

Insulating against hot or cold temperatures is in many respects the same as insulating against shock.

The foam core inner box should be wrapped with several layers of bubble wrap (use extra bubble wrap on the corners). It should then be put in an outer box filled with polystyrene (Styrofoam) peanuts. If the piece is heavy, use thick sheets of foam rubber (such as thick weather stripping) instead of peanuts, which can be too easily crushed.

The painting should be kept vertical, which helps to distribute any shock (think in terms of a diver diving into the water head first instead of belly first).

Delicate assemblages, on the other hand, may be better off if kept horizontal to avoid putting too much downward pressure on the adhesive holding objects to the surface of the painting. However, if the objects are light and the adhesive is strong, the piece can be packed vertically.

In all cases the bottom of the box should be well padded with additional layers of bubble wrap or thick sheets of foam. To know if you have put enough packing material in, shake the outer box vigorously. If you feel the inner box moving, add more packing material.

If the artwork is light, the outer box can be made of corrugated cardboard. If the work is heavy or it is being transported over a long distance, a plywood crate will give better protection. We recommend 3/4" plywood for large work. Small, light work can be crated with 1/2" plywood.